

is presented to individuals who have especially made contributions to the security and national interests of the United States, to people who have worked for world peace, who have found cures for incredible diseases, and who have done cultural and other significant things of public or private endeavors. To join that group I am, indeed, so honored. For the President to do this has been something that I could never have anticipated.

I have been very deeply honored to serve the people of Maryland and of this Nation. To the people of Maryland, I thank you. I could never have had the opportunity to serve in the public sphere in such a way had they not honored me with their confidence and trust by voting for me. I am so thankful for the opportunity that they have given me to actually serve my State and my country.

Yes, I am the longest serving woman in the Senate. But for me, it is not how long I have served but how well I have tried to serve. To me, service is about being connected to my constituents, staying close to them, making sure they don't fall between the cracks, and looking out for their day-to-day needs—whether a Social Security check, helping a veteran or working on issues such as college affordability.

For me, service has been rooted in the values I learned in my home and in my community. I think today of my father and mother, who worked so hard so that my sisters and I would get an education. They owned a small neighborhood grocery store. Every day at 6 in the morning, my father would walk across the street from our row house home and open up the door of his grocery store and say: Good morning. Can I help you?

That is the way I was raised, and that is what I have carried with me every single day; that is: Good morning. Can I help you? But they also saw that my sisters and I had a fantastic education. I had the opportunity to go to Catholic schools, and there the sisters taught us about leadership and service. But actually they focused on the values of our faith: Love your neighbor, care for the sick, worry about the poor, always insist that neighbors should help neighbors, and it is better to light one little candle than to curse the darkness.

We were also raised to believe in the American dream. My great-grandmother came to this country from Poland. She had little money in her pocket. Women didn't even have the right to vote when she arrived. She had a big dream in her heart. If you worked hard and played by the rules, life would be better for you. She never thought, coming as she did, that her own great-granddaughter would one day be a U.S. Senator. But then that is only in America, where my story has been possible.

Only in America do we have this incredible right to speak our mind. I got into politics as a protester. They want-

ed to put a highway through the neighborhood in which I grew up and some other neighborhoods in the city. I organized the "Hell no, we won't go" committee and took on city hall.

Do you know what is so great about this country? In others, they put you in jail and beat you. In this country, they sent me to the city council, and I beat the political bosses.

This is an amazing country. Our Constitution, the freedoms guaranteed in it—the freedom of assembly, the freedom to speak, and most of all, the freedom to serve and to be all that you can be—has been a marvelous gift.

In a few days, I will be honored by the President of the United States, but the real honor has always been to be here. I never dreamed such an honor would come my way, nor did I seek it. I am so deeply honored to be touched by this, and I am honored to be among the people who will get this award. Among those who will be honored is the dearly beloved Shirley Chisholm, whom I served with in the House. She was always unbought and unbossed. Willie Mays will be honored. He always brought it home and knew where home plate was. Barbra Streisand, who always hit the high notes, and, of course, even Yogi Berra, who shared my love of language, are going to be honored. Young, distinguished Americans like Katherine Johnson, who was one of the first African Americans in space, and Lee Hamilton, who worked both in Congress and in the private sector to bring about world peace, will be honored. What a distinguished group of Americans, and I will be glad to stand with them.

I wish to thank President Obama for this tremendous honor. I thank the people of Maryland for this tremendous opportunity to serve, and I thank the United States of America for enabling someone like me to follow her dream. I hope, in getting this award, that I will continue to make my pledge to be of service.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of LaShann Moutique DeArcy Hall, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Hall nomination.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for about 6 or 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST FRANCE AND SYRIAN REFUGEES

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to express my deepest sympathies to the people of Paris and all those affected by the terrorist attacks of Islamic extremists. As we all know, hundreds of people were killed or injured in the attacks, including at least one American citizen. No one should be faced with horrific violence when attending a soccer game or concert or simply carrying out their daily lives. On behalf of Iowans, I stand with the people of France. I offer our support in recovering from and responding to those attacks.

Unfortunately, there is fear that similar attacks could soon take place on U.S. soil. There is even a video that ISIS released earlier today threatening to attack America. Moreover, if we follow the administration's announced plans to bring in thousands of new Syrian refugees, we could very well be letting in similar extremists who want to harm Americans. That is because it appears that at least one of the ISIS terrorists in Paris had recently registered as a Syrian refugee in the country of Greece. Until last Friday, he appeared to all the world to be no different from any of the other thousands of people fleeing the chaos in Syria. This could happen here too.

The No. 1 responsibility under the Constitution of our Federal Government is to protect the homeland and to secure the country against all threats. We must do all we can to prevent a terrorist style attack from happening here, but under the administration's proposed plan, we may not be able to stop such an attack. We cannot tell who among the thousands of Syrian refugees the administration wishes to resettle here are terrorists. One particularly alarming statement to this effect came from the Director of the FBI, James Comey. He was in a hearing before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs just on October 8 of this year. Director Comey said "there are certain gaps . . . in the data available to us" in screening Syrian refugees. This data, which includes fingerprints, background and biographic information, is crucial for an adequate screening of potential refugees entering the United

States. Director Comey continued in that hearing saying, “There is risk associated with bringing anybody in from the outside, but especially from a conflict zone like that.”

Director Comey has also previously acknowledged that despite a large pool of data on Iraqi refugees, our past program for admitting refugees from Iraq inadvertently allowed into our country “a number of people who were of serious concern, including two that were charged when we found their fingerprints on improvised explosive devices from Iraq.”

Our ability to screen individuals from war-torn Syria is extremely limited by comparison. Several States’ Governors have recognized this difficulty and have accordingly moved to suspend cooperation with the administration in settling Syrian refugees in their States until those security concerns are addressed. I share such concerns for protecting our country against terrorists who have clearly infiltrated the Syrian refugee population. I recently wrote a letter to the leaders of the Senate Appropriations Committee. In that letter I asked that taxpayers’ funds be used effectively to properly and securely screen refugees entering the United States. I also requested in the letter that as part of the appropriations legislation before the committee, it require a comprehensive plan on how security will be achieved. I requested this be a condition for any funding for refugee resettlement for Syrian refugees. I said then and I emphasize now that not one dollar should be expended until stringent parameters for vetting these refugees are established.

I would also suggest to President Obama that he reconsider his plan to admit Syrian refugees until the dust settles and we get to the bottom of the Paris attacks. We need to analyze what happened. We need to figure out how we can better screen these refugees and ensure that terrorists among them are not evading proper screenings. We need a timeout before we press forward.

I stress that the United States remains an extremely generous country when it comes to refugees. This year alone we will allow 75,000 refugees fleeing persecution around the world to enter our country, but we have to set our own citizens’ security as a top priority. I call on Congress to act to ensure that this administration certifies that the most stringent security standards are in place before allowing any more of the Syrian refugees into our country. It is our responsibility to do everything we can to prevent Friday’s attacks from happening here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to vote to confirm this qualified judge, LaShann DeArcy Hall, to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Ms. Hall is an outstanding choice to fill this position. After decades of serv-

ice in both the public sector and the private sector, Ms. Hall’s breadth of knowledge and depth of experience will guide her for any case that happens to come before her. In her current role at a major international law firm, Ms. Hall specializes in high-stakes, complex commercial litigation. During her years of public service, including her time serving as a commissioner with the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics, Ms. Hall has worked tirelessly to help make her community a more fair and just place.

Ms. Hall’s credentials are absolutely worthy of this position on the Federal bench, and we will be a stronger nation with more women like Ms. Hall serving as judges in our Federal court system.

Ms. Hall is a graduate of Howard University School of Law and she served in the U.S. Air Force. She is a highly accomplished lawyer, and she has devoted her entire career to various forms of public service. She is dedicated to her community, and she cares deeply about this country. LaShann DeArcy Hall would make an excellent Federal judge and would add much needed diversity to the Federal bench.

Mr. President, I urge all my colleagues to vote to confirm her.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time remaining on this nomination be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hall nomination?

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 305 Ex.]

YEAS—93

Alexander
Ayotte

Baldwin
Barrasso

Bennet
Blumenthal

Booker
Boozman
Boxer
Brown
Burr
Cantwell
Capito
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Cassidy
Coats
Cochran
Collins
Coons
Corker
Cornyn
Crapo
Daines
Donnelly
Durbin
Enzi
Ernst
Feinstein
Fischer
Flake
Franken
Gardner
Gillibrand

Grassley
Hatch
Heinrich
Heitkamp
Heller
Hirono
Hoeven
Inhofe
Isakson
Johnson
Kaine
King
Kirk
Klobuchar
Lankford
Leahy
Lee
Manchin
Markey
McCain
McCaskill
McConnell
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Moran
Murkowski
Murphy
Murray

Nelson
Paul
Peters
Portman
Reed
Reid
Risch
Roberts
Rounds
Rubio
Sasse
Schatz
Schumer
Scott
Sessions
Shaheen
Shelby
Stabenow
Sullivan
Tester
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Udall
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wicker
Wyden

NAYS—1

Perdue

NOT VOTING—6

Blunt
Cotton
Cruz

Graham
Sanders
Vitter

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MASTER SERGEANT JOSHUA L. WHEELER

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, the Presiding Officer, Senator LANKFORD, and I want to recognize and pay tribute to Army MSG Joshua Wheeler. Joshua was born in Roland, OK. He was deployed to Kirkuk Province, Iraq, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. I didn’t remember him at the time, but I was there during that time. He was deployed to Kirkuk to support Operation Inherent Resolve. That was his 14th deployment in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Joshua’s unit, along with Iraqi and Kurdish forces, raided a compound near the city of Kirkuk, freeing 70 prisoners from captivity. Josh died of injuries sustained in that firefight. He would have turned 40 this month.

Josh attended and graduated from Muldrow High School in 1994, and a